

Resiliency in Preventing and Adapting to COVID-19—Perseverance©

This will be my last post in the series of cognitive adaptative skills—perseverance—that can be used when we are confronted with adversity, crisis, or significant cultural and societal change. **Perseverance** is the willingness to *endure* whatever challenges necessary to achieve a desired objective, goal, or vision. It is an *inherent driving force* that we all possess which comes to life when we will not be deterred by circumstances, conditions, or severity of a challenge. It commonly involves an integration of body, mind, and spirit. Body where physical challenges and conditioning maybe involved. Mind, where mental toughness and humility may be required; and spirit where the source of the objective is driven from our inner passion.

For example, I would guess that *mental toughness* is probably equal to *physical conditioning* where successful special forces-type training is involved. I would also guess that Jackie Robinson’s handling of “attempted mental abuse” was the *key factor* in his *success* as the first African American major league baseball player. (April 16th was the 74th anniversary of his appearance) I quoted the term “attempted” since to actually *be* verbally abused requires one’s permission of acknowledgement by *reaction*, rather a non-activating *response*, which he appears to have mastered. The spiritual source of passion is actively discussed by Oprah Winfrey which she attributes to be a major factor in her highly successful career. When *integrated, aligned, and focused*, these three human qualities, driven by perseverance, almost ensures one’s success.

About a year ago, I was shopping for an excellent book-on-tape when an employee at Barnes and Noble highly recommended I listen to Bill O’Reilly’s book, *Killing England*. My knee-jerk reaction was resistance. Then she said to me, “I think you would really enjoy listening to the raw details of why there is an independent America today.” I decided to let go of my resistance and bought the tape. Once I started listening, I was enthralled by his accounting the events unlike anything I could remember from a history course. I’m always careful about such books being totally accurate, since there is commonly a prejudice about the writer’s point of view. However, what impressed me most of all, relative to that time, was the *tenacity, endurance, and perseverance* of the American volunteer army in combat with the English professionals—who were considered the most formidable fighting

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force in the world. Most of all, was the leadership of George Washington, as portrayed in the book, as the personification of the three descriptive characteristics above. He experienced both success and the humility of defeat, and ultimately *endured* to achieve success. In my opinion, the essence of the book was as much about leadership perseverance and resiliency as it was about the military victory. I have since recommended it to several friends.

Fast-forward to the present. In my opinion, one of the greatest examples of *perseverance* still occurring today, are those involved in the diversity movement; which formally began in 1985 with the publication of the book *Workforce 2000*. They include a complete cast of Diversity managers and facilitators, executives and line managers, course participants, community participants and leaders, etc. As an *organizational initiative*, it is probably the longest in American history and like the Phoenix, it appears to have no intention of dying. Everything and everyone involved and associated with it, by self-declaration, exemplifies *perseverance*, in practice, and as an organizational and societal vision. I remember in the early stages; it was common for participants to show up with an accepted attitude of confrontation. Effective, centered facilitators would not be moved, they simply focused on moving the needle forward, while clearly focusing on the long-term goal. As I review the list of resilience skills discussed in this series—**Emotional Calmness** resulting in centeredness; **Personal Responsibility** resulting in ownership; **Realistic Assessment** resulting in accepting the consequences; **Confidence** resulting in enrollment; and **Openness** resulting in transformation—I feel the cast of characters, in one way or another, exemplify them all to the present day.

Postscript

In 1976, Erich Fromm, a humanistic psychologist, wrote a book titled, *TO HAVE OR TO BE*. Based upon that book and its contents, Innovations created an organizational model: [**Mind-Set** (Box 1)] → [**Behaviors** (Box 2)] → [**Results** (Box 3)] which we call **The State of Mind Diagram**. A more complete description of Box 2 is not only behaviors, but structure, organization, participation, and all the elements of *equitable opportunity*. This is where most of our efforts are focused in our attempt to create inclusion. The difficulty with this one-dimensional approach is that we tend to ignore the invisible contents of Box 1, which undermine much of the successes in Box 2. Namely, the dominant “isms” are still alive and well, as well as ethnocentrism, where immigrants are impacted; invisibly buried in the foundation of a culture. I suggest that as long as these issues are not directly addressed, the phenomena we describe as inclusion will continue to have turnstiles

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and subtle forms of exclusion, which we attempt to solve with behavior-modification; where the **true** source of the problem is cognitive, not behavioral. The most important book I have read about diversity which makes this distinction clear, since its inception, is titled, **White Fragility**, by Robin Diangelo. It is a transformational book that can serve as a foundation to **recreate** a united America. I end with a question to us all: **“Is it possible to have true “equitable opportunity” or “inclusion,” in practice, where human equality is not an embedded part of a culture?”** (I suggest conversations by significantly diverse groups.)

*A personal thanks to all of you who have taken time to read and recommend these posts. I hope that you have gained value from the **comments** and **questions** I have raised as we attempt to work through these difficult times to recreate a united America, much like those who faced overwhelming obstacles during the Revolutionary War.*

Reference

A “provocative read” which is a harbinger of the next pandemic:

The Aftermath—William Guillory, Ph.D., The Center for Creativity and Inquiry, Salt Lake City, Utah. (Paperback available from thewayoftheheart.org and e-book from Amazon)

Please use the following email address: ResilienceAdaptationVisioning@gmail.com if you have private questions or comments about any of the subjects discussed in these posts.

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